

2 This Negative Declaration (ND) has been prepared by the California State Lands  
 3 Commission (CSLC), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act  
 4 (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.), to analyze and disclose the  
 5 environmental effects associated with the CSLC Proposed Sale of School Lands in  
 6 Imperial County (Project). The Project would authorize the CSLC to sell two parcels  
 7 within a 640-acre parcel of School Lands (Section 36 of Township 10 South, Range 14  
 8 East, San Bernardino Meridian)\* located in the central basin of the Colorado Desert, 2  
 9 miles east-northeast of Niland, Imperial County. Niland is a small community on the  
 10 southeast side of the Salton Sea, approximately 80 miles southeast of Palm Springs  
 11 and 19 miles north of Brawley. The parcel is accessed via Beal Road, which heads east  
 12 from Niland's Main Street and traverses the property in a southwest-northeast direction.  
 13 The Project area is located on the U.S. Geological Survey 7.5' Iris Wash and Iris  
 14 quadrangle maps (Figure ES-1).

15 The CSLC prepared an ND because, while the Initial Study identified a potentially  
 16 significant impact related to the Project, after analysis of all the facts and circumstances,  
 17 CSLC staff believes the Project would have a less than significant impact on the  
 18 environment.

19 **PROPOSED PROJECT**

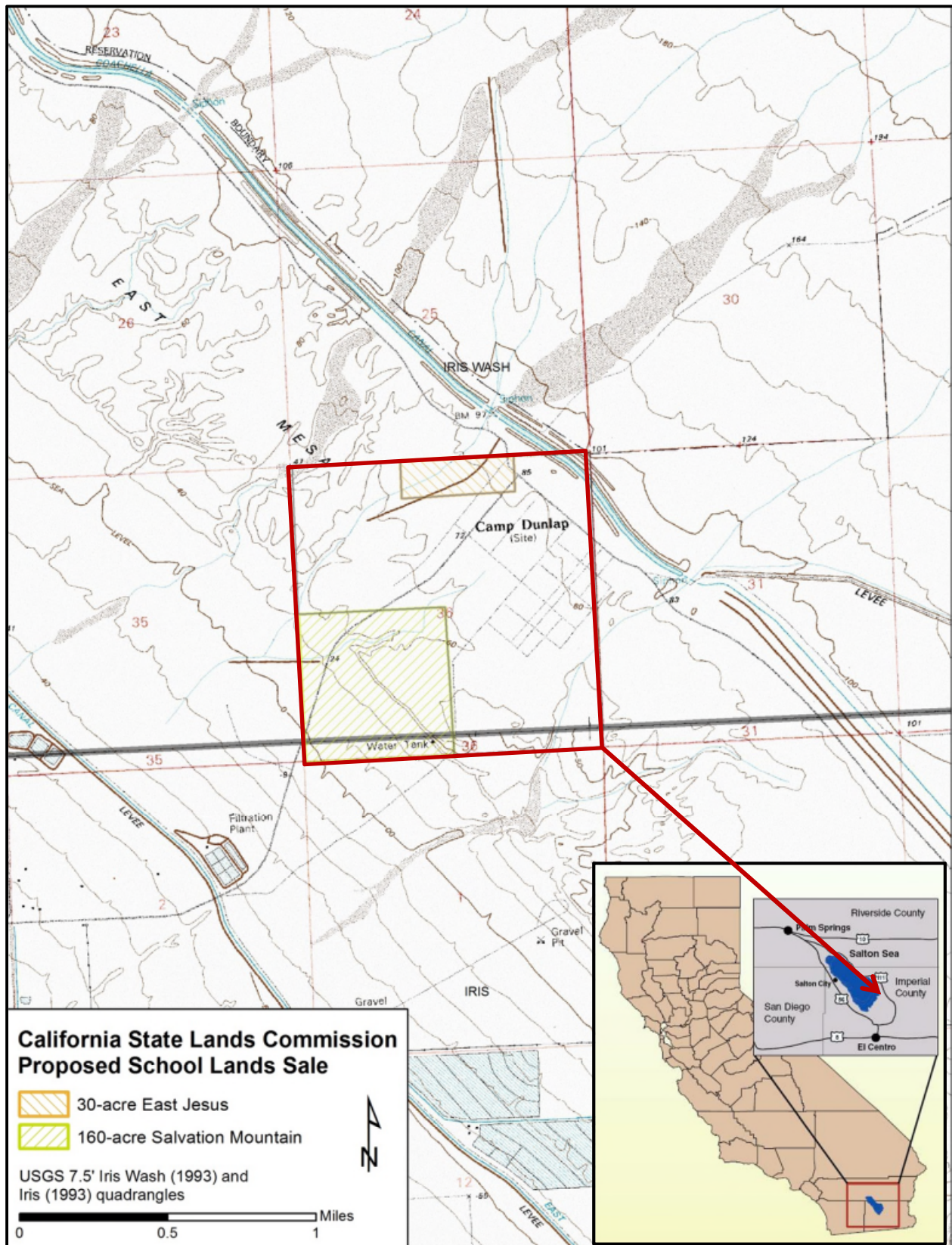
20 The CSLC proposes to partition a 640-acre School Lands parcel (Assessor's Parcel  
 21 Number 003-240-005) to facilitate the sale of three smaller parcels, referred to as the  
 22 “Slab City,” “Salvation Mountain,” and “East Jesus” parcels. The CSLC currently has  
 23 applications to purchase all three parcels. Table ES-1 provides information on each  
 24 parcel (see also Figure ES-2).

**Table ES-1. Proposed Parcels within 640-Acre School Lands Parcel**

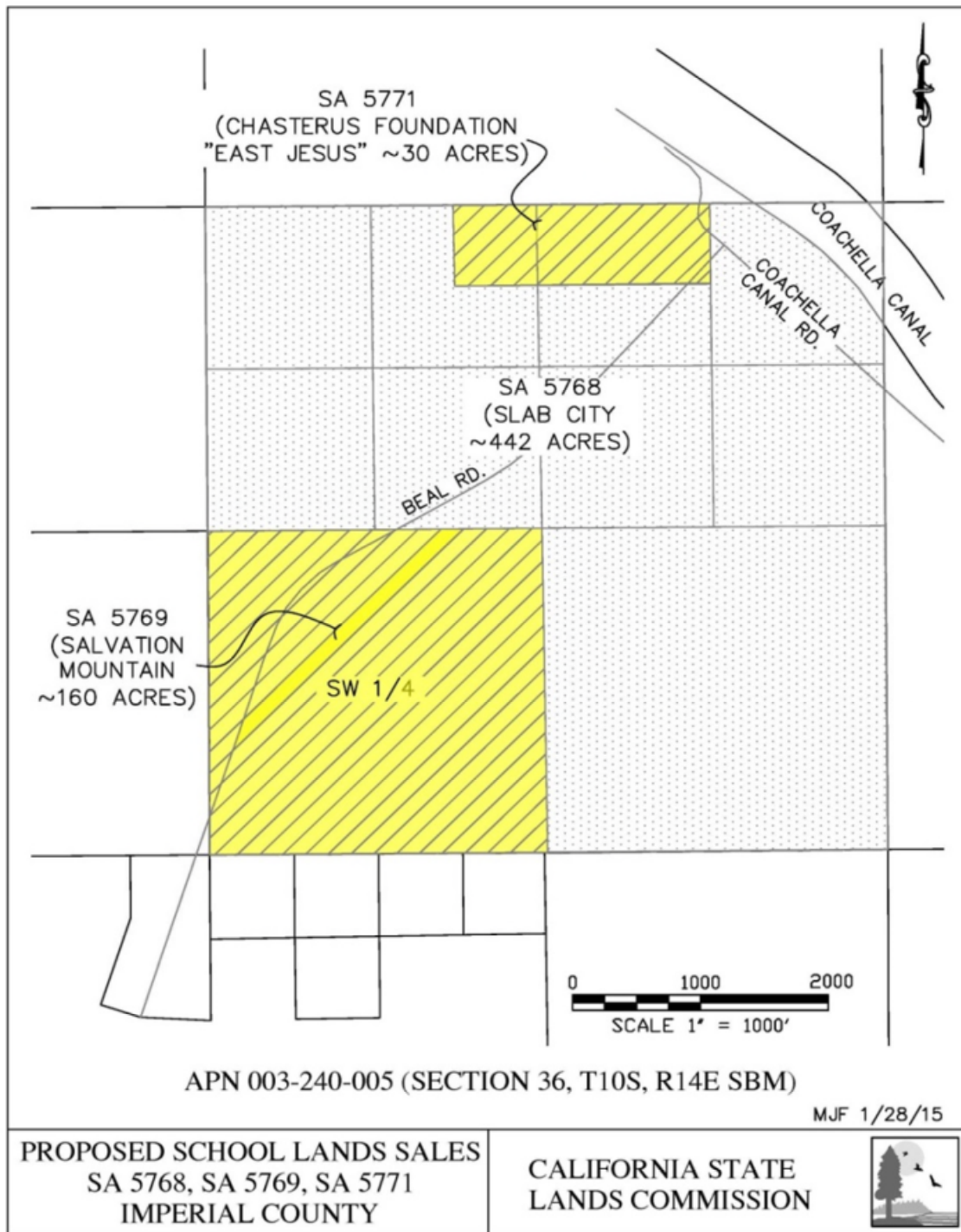
<b>Parcel Name</b>	<b>Reference #</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Prospective Buyer</b>
Slab City	SA 5768	450 acres	Slab City Community Group
Salvation Mountain	SA 5769	160 acres	Salvation Mountain Inc.
East Jesus	SA 5771	30 acres	Chasterus Foundation

\* School Lands were granted to the State of California by the federal government under the Act of March 3, 1853 (10 Stat. 244) for the purpose of supporting public education in California, and consisted of the 16th and 36th sections of land in each township (with the exceptions of lands reserved for public use, lands taken by private land claims, and lands known to be mineral in character). Title to the lands vested in the State upon approval of the U.S. Township Survey Plats (subject to the exceptions described above). School lands were placed into a statutory trust in 1984 when the State Legislature approved the School Land Bank Act (Act), created the School Land Bank Fund (SLBF), and designated the CSLC as trustee of the SLBF. The Act directs that school lands be proactively managed and enhanced to provide for an economic base in support of the public school system.

Figure ES-1. Project Site Location



**Figure ES-2. Salvation Mountain and East Jesus Parcels**



- 1 Prospective buyers are: (1) Slab City Community Group, a nonprofit group comprised of
- 2 a number of residents of Slab City; (2) Salvation Mountain Inc., a nonprofit organization
- 3 formed in 2011 to support Salvation Mountain located in the southwest quarter of the
- 4 640-acre parcel; and (3) Chasterus Foundation, a nonprofit organization that operates
- 5 an art installation known as "East Jesus."



1 This ND analyzes the sale of only the Salvation Mountain and East Jesus School Land  
2 parcels. The potential sale by the CSLC of the 450-acre Slab City parcel will be subject  
3 to a separate environmental analysis in the future.

#### 4 **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

5 The Project area includes the former Camp Dunlap, a 631-acre U.S. Marine Corps base  
6 that operated in the Project area during World War II. After the war, the camp was no  
7 longer needed for military purposes and was deactivated. In 1961, the property was  
8 quitclaimed back to the State of California. In the mid-1960s, a few individuals began to  
9 establish residences on the cement foundations that remained from Camp Dunlap.  
10 Homes included buildings constructed of plywood, discarded lumber, and other  
11 materials that remained from the dismantling of Camp Dunlap, as well as mobile homes  
12 and recreational vehicles. The small community became known as Slab City.

13 Clean-up operations on the former Camp Dunlap site are the responsibility of the U.S.  
14 Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) since the site is part of the Formerly Used Defense  
15 Sites (FUDS) program. Prior to conducting the biological and cultural surveys for this  
16 ND, a visual unexploded ordinance (UXO) sweep was performed at the 30-acre East  
17 Jesus and 160-acre Salvation Mountain sites in August 2015 by  
18 Engineering/Remediation Resources Group under contract to the CSLC. The visual field  
19 survey in the East Jesus site identified one MK 76 practice bomb, two inert training  
20 smoke grenades, two MK 76 practice bomb fins, and numerous small arms brass.  
21 These items were left in place because they did not pose an explosive hazard and were  
22 incorporated into artwork. The visual field survey within the Salvation Mountain site did  
23 not reveal any hazardous ammunitions or explosives. (See Appendix A, Environmental,  
24 Cultural, and Other Clearance Surveys, for additional information on the UXO survey.)  
25 The USACE estimates that some FUDS Program-listed sites could take until 2085 or  
26 beyond to cleanup. (See FUDS Frequently Asked Questions at: [www.usace.army.  
27 /missions/environmental/formerlyuseddefense/sites/frequentlyaskedquestions.aspx](http://www.usace.army.mil/missions/environmental/formerlyuseddefense/sites/frequentlyaskedquestions.aspx).)

28 Located near Slab City are Salvation Mountain and the art installation called East  
29 Jesus. Salvation Mountain is a 50-foot-tall structure built into a hillside starting in the  
30 early 1980s using concrete, adobe, and paint. In 1990, the original structure collapsed,  
31 and construction began on a new structure. Salvation Mountain Inc. currently maintains  
32 this structure. The East Jesus site initially consisted of sculptures and art cars, and later  
33 grew to include dozens of art installations made from discarded materials and a  
34 compound housing a few occupants. Chasterus Foundation currently operates the East  
35 Jesus art installation. Current activities within the Salvation Mountain and East Jesus  
36 parcels will continue to occur and are identified as baseline conditions. The Project does  
37 not include any construction or ground-disturbing activities. Any other future potential  
38 uses are speculative at this time.

1 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

2 The environmental factors checked below in Table ES-2 would be potentially affected  
 3 by this Project; a checked box indicates that one impact would be a “Potentially  
 4 Significant Impact,” as detailed in Section 3 of this ND.

**Table ES-2. Environmental Issues and Potentially Significant Impacts**

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forest Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Geology and Soils
<input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards and Hazardous Materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology and Water Quality
<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use and Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise
<input type="checkbox"/> Population and Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities and Service Systems	

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